

HOMEOWNERS GUIDE TO STORMWATER DITCHES

Vegetated ditches are more effective than those lined with concrete, rocks, or bare dirt because water can filter into the ground while flow is slowed, erosion is minimized, and water temperatures aren't increased by the hard surfaces.

Photo by W. Smith

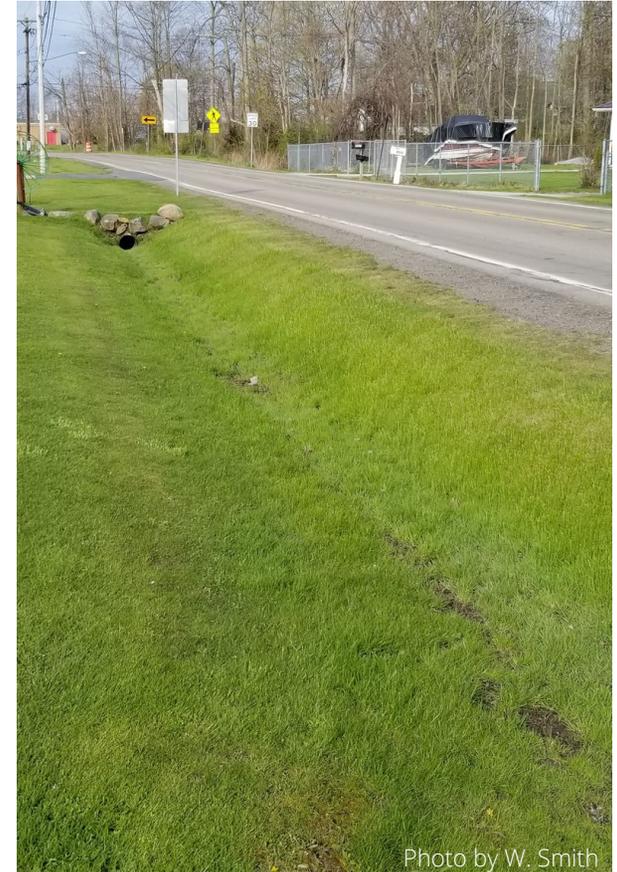


Photo by W. Smith

Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance



Lake Erie Watershed
Protection Alliance

c/o Erie County Dept of Env. & Planning
95 Franklin Street, Room 1077
Buffalo, New York 14202



Photo by Cornell.edu

WHAT IS A STORMWATER DITCH?

A stormwater ditch is plumbing made to direct rain and snow-melt into natural waterways or stormwater treatment areas and away from roads or fields. Maintenance of these ditches is crucial to the integrity of the surrounding land and to the protection of local waterways.

Ditches can convey pollutants such as lawn treatment chemicals, excess nutrients, pet waste, automobile fluids, and sediment to local streams and rivers. This pollution affects wildlife, vegetation, and can even have a harmful impact on people who use the water for recreation or drinking.

Effects of Poor Ditch Maintenance

- Algal blooms in water bodies
- Poor water quality
- Increased water temperature
- Harm to local fisheries
- Flooding and backup of stormwater on your property
- Flooding in local waterways
- Excessive erosion causing sediment to be deposited into water bodies



BE A GOOD LAND STEWARD

DO'S

- Keep ditch clear of large overgrowth that obstructs water flow. Small vegetation is okay because it slows water down and allows it to infiltrate
- Remove litter and yard waste that may wash into ditch
- Make sure culverts under driveways are clear

DONT'S

- Do NOT spray chemicals such as weed killer, fertilizer, or any other harmful chemicals in or around ditches to "clean" them
- Do NOT dispose of any pet waste, trash, or yard waste in ditches
- Do NOT plant large trees, shrubs, or plants that could interfere with water flow
- NEVER dump anything into ditches

